June 5, 1968

Mr. Mark Lane
c/o Holt, Rinehart & Winston
383 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mark:

Long and close observation of your constitutional corruption did not prepare me for your flaunting of thievery in my face. You wound up lying, knowing you were lying, and because this was public I am impelled to set the record straight between us.

In late 1966, at the behest of your friends, then strangers to me, I abandoned my own second book to go to California and take Liebeler off your back. If your hackles rise at this, I'll send you copies of their letters. En route, Liebeler faced invitations for confrontations, each of which he avoided,, and when I reached Los Angeles, he suddenly had an emergency requiring his urgent present in the Archives - the one day of the week it is closed. On this trip, as even you must know, I defended you against Connally's slander and praised you in public for that which, in my opinion, warrants praise.

The one thing that stopped me without doubt your friend and flack Mort Sahl reported to you, the caller who called you a crook for stealing clothing from him. This I could not defend.

Before then, your theft from my first book was apparent. Before then, correspondence with Arthur Cohen in its own way affirmed it and Privately I had your manuscript checked and the stolen material was not in it. It had appeared only in WHITEWASH.

Despite my detestation of your unscrupulousness and dishonesty that saddles all the rest of us, I have on every public occasion said what I could in your defense, gone out of my way to support pyou and praised you forrthat praiseworthy thing you did. Not once did I expose you for the wretched disgrace to decency that you are.

As recently as yesterday, I tried to extend the slight courtesy of saving you a cab fare. You lacked even the common decency of leaving a message forrme when you were not at the appointed place for me to pick you up. That I looked all over for you before going to the studio can readily be confirmed, as can the fact of the note on the door for you.

Even then I took with me a person who would give you the opportunity of being heard on 350 radio stations. I declined the opportunity of interviewing you myself, even though I had conducted all the interviews for the three-day period of the booksellers' convention. Need I tell <u>you</u> what I could have confronted you with in such an interview?

Moreover, the show you were on was mine. I postponed it from late April to accommodate you, to assure you an audience in Washington for your new book which I had not then seen. I never displayed one of my books on camera all night.

Gratitude no one who knows you ever expects. But the unspeakable gall of flaunting one of the many things you stole from my work alone in my face is, even for you, below comprehensible description.

That you are a thief I did not say. I am content with your own demonstration of it. That you lied, a custom with you even when it is unnecessary, merely compounded the evil that is your norm.

Now, it is a lie to say your non-existent footnote source is a "printer's error" and you know it. The printer did not write your footnotes. Your incredible unfamiliarity with the material in the Archives that you steal from me and pretend you did all alone is frozen in type in the same words in your text. You repeat the same stupidity. How you can pretend even the slightest acquaintance with the materials with which you claim to work without knowing there is no such thing as an index - indeed, that this is the greatest handicap to their use - is its own and entirely adequate characterization of you and your "work".

When you corrected this frightful demonstration of ignorance and identified the "index" as a "list", you merely affirmed your plagiarism, for as you knew when you tried to shift the subject, there is nothing in that list to warrant citing it as your source. The name "Klein" is never once mentioned in it, nor is there any suggestion of content. This is a particularly careless theft, for you could have cited the file number, as you did on other similar purloinings.

That you knew you lied last night in imputing your ignorance and deliberate dishonesty to a printer's error is established on page 97, where in the text you twice refer to this same non-existent "index of the basic source material".

Nor can it be that even you are so incompetent - or immodest - as to have ignored the citation to Rush to Judgment had it fit. What you snitched was entirely unknown until I published it in WHITEWASH II, whence you stole it.

Consumed by ego as you are, and eaten by your total inability, with all the help and puffery you had, to have brought to light a single major contribution toward the establishment of the truth about the Kennedy assassination, your vaunting vanity compels that you pretend what you do not steal outright is the result of your own work. You cannot acknowledge that another even breathes, save for the minor inappropriate gestures at credit to those largely unknown and not the authors of serious books.

This sickness of mind characterizes your appearances as it does your writing. Because of it, generously prompted by the instinctive dishonesty that is intrinsically your character, in this new work you have taken a basically truthful story, that of the abdication of the media, and so corrupted it that what is not false or distorted will not be credited by intelligent people.

And even there you cannot restrict yourself to the awful truth. You know it is a lie to write and to say as you did last night that 15 publishers agreed to do your book and then broke their words. You know the relatively low opinion they had of your work, and its low quality until it was made over - and not by you. I know what a number of them thought of your book, for unsolicitedly they told me. You lie. And I have been silent.

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It takes a rare talent to libel publishers. You have it.

I will not - at least not now - run the catalogue - of the plagiarisms, deceits, misrepresentations, fabrications and willful lies. I will conclude with those you knowingly and deliberately uttered last night, for the sole purpose of defaming me and disguising your own thefts.

It is a deliberate lie to say that your book was finished a) before mine and b) before I did any work in the field. You had a contract for the delivery of your book that coincided with one I then had. Both called for March 15, 1965, publication. You did not deliver your manuscript, and your new book testifies that you could not, that it was anything but done. I did, and I have receipts for the mailing of each chapter, each of which was insured. WHITEWASH, as I believe its text says, was completed by mid-February 1965.

It is even more of a lie to state that your book was completed before I had done any work in the field. It is more than possible that my first written work predates your "brief", that famous one whose publication so lacks a footnote in Rush to Judgment. Other aspects of my work date from the day of the assassination. That is pretty early.

I think you should also know that, although it was not design and although I had not planned to tape the show - did not bring my own machine and did not expect Dorothy to be there - the tapes she made include the off-the-air exchanges, including your vainglorious threats, typical and never performed, and your specific approval of literary thefts.

It is the great tragedy of our cause that the one publisher with the courage to undertake what is required to make a success of a book on this subject had to attach himself to you, a man with less principle than a worn-out whore. Alas, thereby Holt assumes a responsibility that compels me to give them a copy of this letter. I fear you will never stop the thievery, never end the nasty behind-the-back literary knee and fingernail work that typifies your appearance in any form unless it is forced upon you.

In our first exchange of letters, in which, aside from your typical juvenile threats of frivolous suits, you were totally non-responsive, I ended with the promise that if you would thereafter restrict yourself in public to what was true you'd have no trouble from me. Last night I again told you that if you would not flaunt your crookedness in my face, I would ignore it in public for the sake of what I seek, whether or not you seek the same goal. Thereafter I did.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

CC: President,
HR&W